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Bangalore Mirror

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SAFETY FIRST

Activists demand government direct school managements to ensure safety while engaging students in cleaning activities after 2 hurt in blast

PAGE 4

CHOPPING BOARD

Builder accused of sneakily chopping off 3 trees in BTM Residency without requisite permits

PAGE 5

Over 11,000 complaints filed as apartment parking disputes soar; some cases also require police intervention

PARKING BLOT

10% of complaints with K-RERA pertain to parking

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With over 11,000 complaints filed, parking space disputes have become the biggest source of conflict in apartment complexes across Bengaluru and other major cities in Karnataka. As apartment living expands and car ownership becomes the norm among middle-class families, the battle for parking spots has intensified. Arguments between neighbours over parking have become a daily occurrence, with more than 10% of complaints to the Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority (K-RERA) related to parking issues, many even escalating to police stations.

K-RERA intervenes

K-RERA has been actively addressing these complaints, often ruling in favour of apartment owners. In a recent case, the authority, under Chairman Rakesh Singh, issued an order preventing a builder from leasing out parking spaces. "After reviewing the facts of the case, we have decided to protect the interests of consumers. Until the dispute is resolved, the builder is prohibited from selling or leasing any

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

"After reviewing the facts of the case, we have decided to protect the interests of consumers. Until the dispute is resolved, the builder is prohibited from selling or leasing any parking space

— K-RERA ruling in favour of residents

Fake cop spins a toll tale

Authorities mull over stricter verification processes for issuing and checking police ID cards after conman has free run for 1.5 years

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The routine flow of tollbooth transactions had been disrupted by an audacious act of deception. A meticulously crafted, yet utterly fraudulent, police inspector's identity card has surfaced, its fake holder exploiting the uniform's perceived authority to navigate toll plazas with impunity.

The Central Crime Branch (CCB) has launched an investigation after a man was found misusing a fake police inspector's ID card to evade toll charges and gain unauthorised access at various toll plazas. The case has raised serious concerns over the illegal use of police credentials for personal benefits and the possible

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Hands-on art

Namma Ashram is presenting a beginner-friendly pottery workshop, where expert instructor, Maya Babu, will guide you through the basics of pottery. **Where: Namma Ashram, Siddapura; When: March 5 to April 2**

02 Musical celebration

The Indian Music Experience Museum (IME) presents "Experience the Magic of Circle Singing" with Albert Hera, an internationally acclaimed jazz vocalist and improvisation expert. The program is designed to express the power of collective music-making. **Where: Indian Music Experience Museum, JP Nagar; When: March 9, 10:30 am**

03 Celebrate womanhood

Watson's is set to host a Women's Day celebration, dedicated to honoring and celebrating the spirit of womanhood with music, entertainment, and exciting perks for all ladies attending. Renowned artist Anita Rajkumari will be offering complimentary glitter makeup. **Where: Watson's, Indiranagar; When: March 8, 9 pm**

04 Behind the lens

Small World is organising a Short Film Making Workshop, designed for aspiring filmmakers of all levels. The workshop aims to guide you through the process of creating a compelling 2-minute movie, using just your mobile phone. **Where: Small World, Koramangala; When: March 5 to March 23**

05 Art exhibition

Museum of Art & Photography (MAP) is presenting 'We don't end at our edges', an immersive exhibition featuring artworks by Bengaluru-based artist, writer and educator Ravikumar Kashi. He uses paper to 'paint' letters from the Kannada alphabet, transforming language itself into a metaphor for the permeability of human connection. **Where: Museum of Art & Photography, Infosys Foundation Gallery, Ground floor; When: Opening on March 8**

Recurring paper leaks spark concern over exam integrity

With advancing technology, YouTube channels and instant messaging applications emerge as a marketplace for leaked papers

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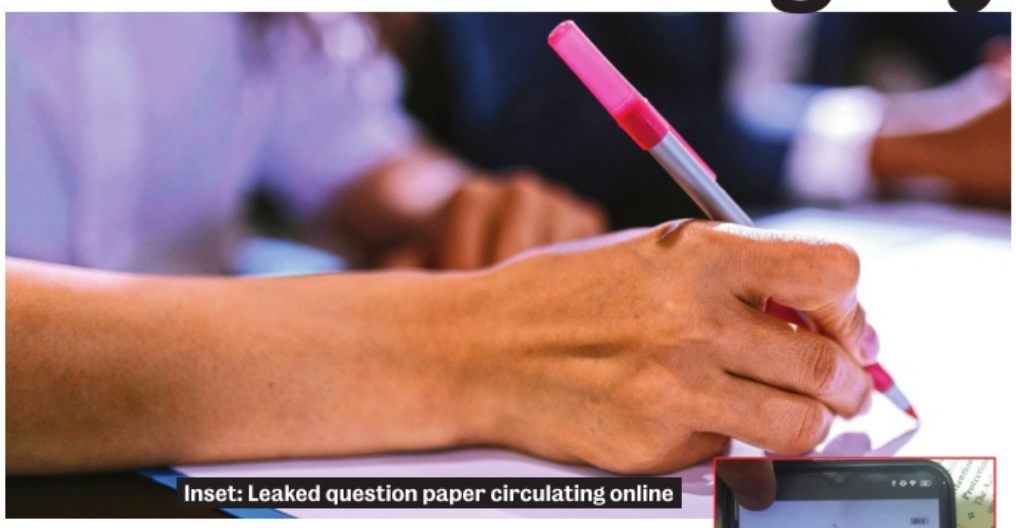

Inset: Leaked question paper circulating online

A day before the Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) state-level preparatory science exam, the question paper was leaked on social media, prompting private schools to demand an investigation by the Examination Board.

The exam, scheduled for Monday at 2 pm, had its question paper circulating on YouTube as early as Sunday night, nearly 18 hours before the test began. When students received the official question paper, it matched the leaked version exactly, raising serious concerns about fairness.

Over the years, the methods of leaking question papers have evolved with advancements in technology. Earlier, leaked question papers were photocopied and discreetly sold to students, for a price, the night before the exam. This was a well-organised underground network, where students willing to pay would gain access to exam questions before the test.

Educationists said that as digital communication has advanced, leaks have shifted from physical copies to email distribution. Question papers are scanned and shared with select groups via email, making it easier to reach more students while maintaining secrecy. With the rise of instant messaging apps, the leaks have become even more widespread, with platforms like WhatsApp enabling the rapid dissemination of question papers to thousands of students within minutes.

An educationist said that YouTube channels are being used as a marketplace for leaked papers. "Some individuals upload partial or complete question papers on these channels, either as a preview to lure students or by charging money for full access. The ease of sharing digital content has made it nearly impossible to contain such leaks, raising concerns about exam integrity," the educationist said.

Ramakrishna D, a teacher, opined that students gaining access to leaked question papers undermines the very purpose of examinations. He said that it creates an unfair advantage, diminishes the credibility of academic evaluations, and discourages honest efforts. "More importantly, it fosters a culture where students rely on shortcuts instead of genuine learning, which can have long-term consequences on their future prospects," he said.

> **"There seems to be a nexus involving certain schools, coaching centers, private tutorials, and a few compromised officials** – N Shashi Kumar D, General Secretary, KAMS

Shashi Kumar D, General Secretary of Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools in Karnataka (KAMS) and Convenor of Karnataka Private School Managements, Teaching and Non Teaching Staff Co-ordination Committee (KPMTCC), expressed concern over the recurring controversy surrounding preparatory exams each year. He questioned why question paper leaks have not been curbed effectively. "In the past, students would line up at photocopy shops for leaked papers, and now they are scouring YouTube channels. It appears that a group of long-time players are behind this. There seems to be a nexus involving certain schools, coaching centers, private tutorials, and a few compromised officials," he remarked.

HC raps district registrar as woman issued two birth certificates

The Karnataka High Court has instructed the state government to direct registrars of births and deaths to nullify previous birth certificates whilst issuing corrected ones. The directive includes a requirement for registrars to provide applicants with written confirmation of the previous certificate's cancellation. Additionally, all correction details and cancellation information must be recorded in the e-janma portal. Justice Suraj Govindaraj provided these instructions whilst ruling on a petition by Syeda Afifa Aymehn, a resident of Hosapete in Vijayanagara district.

Born in March 1993, the petitioner's educational certificates, Aadhaar, and passport showed her correct birth date. She later discovered that her birth certificate incorrectly listed it as April 1993. After obtaining a civil court order in 2020 for correction, the petitioner was issued a new certificate by the registrar, without cancelling the original, leaving her with two documents. When attempting to update her passport, authorities questioned the discrepancy between the two birth dates. The registrar declined her request for clarification, suggesting she seek court intervention.

The court criticised the district registrar's actions for unnecessarily demanding judicial intervention. It stated the registrar should have cancelled the original certificate upon issuing the corrected version. The court ordered the registrar to invalidate the incorrect birth certificate, and provide written confirmation of this action to the petitioner. **— BMB**

Bleach production made better

In response to the expensive and energy consuming process of industrial production of Hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2), commonly used as a bleach, disinfectant, and oxidising agent, researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have developed an alternative, on-site production strategy for H_2O_2 which can also degrade industrial pollutants like toxic dyes.

The scientists utilised a zinc-air battery in which oxygen reduction generates H_2O_2. "Zinc is an abundant and historically used element. It is very cheap in India," said Aninda J Bhattacharyya, Professor in the Interdisciplinary Centre for Energy Research (ICER) and Solid State and Structural Chemistry Unit (SSCU) at IISc, and corresponding author of the study published in Small Methods. Bhattacharyya explained that using a battery to directly produce H_2O_2 is a novel approach. He pointed out that using batteries produces or stores electrical energy, in addition to chemical reactions. "You don't have to do other things. You have a battery, and you run it. We have curtailed the voltage, such that it is only producing H_2O_2. What we are doing is that along with producing H_2O_2, we are storing energy because it takes place inside the cell," he said.

As it is colourless, the H_2O_2 generated needs to be detected. This is done by introducing a dye, a toxic pollutant produced by the textile industry. When H_2O_2 is created, it reacts with the dye, degrading it and changing its color.

"The H_2O_2 generated will further decompose into various radicals (such as hydroxide and superoxide) which are highly raw, reactive organic species that will eventually degrade the textile dye," said Asutosh Behera, first author and PhD student at SSCU. This degradation helps increase the efficiency of H_2O_2 production and eliminate the toxic dye. Although some fundamental challenges must be overcome, the researchers believe that the strategy is scalable and may have other applications. **— BMB**

Illegal stay in Bengaluru: Two foreign nationals nabbed

CCB's Women's Protection Squad conducted raid in Anandnagar over visa violations; officials warn landlords about strict compliance with Aliens Act to avoid legal action

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A quiet residential neighbourhood in Anandnagar turned into the centre of a high-stakes operation on the evening of February 27 when officers from the Central Crime Branch's (CCB) Women's Protection Squad swooped in to investigate an immigration violation.

What they found was two foreign nationals living unlawfully in the city, long after their business visas had expired. Acting on a tip-off, the squad swiftly moved to the residence under the Hebbal police station limits. The two foreign men, originally invited to India by an Indian national on business visas, had overstayed without legal documentation, raising serious concerns about immigration compliance.

Officials also launched an inquiry into the property owner and the individual who facilitated their entry into the country.

The Police officials have handed over a detailed report to the Hebbal police station, where a case has been registered under the Foreigners Act. Investigators are now looking into whether the duo was involved in any other illegal activities during their extended stay. Officials have urged landlords to conduct thorough background checks before renting properties to foreign nationals and stressed the importance of strict visa compliance.

House owners face prosecution for violating Aliens Act

Officials have initiated legal action against house owners who have rented out properties to foreign nationals without complying with the Aliens Act 1946. According to Section 7 of the Act, house owners or managing persons must submit Form-C to the Foreigners Registration Office (FRRO) within 24 hours of renting out their property. Failure to do so is a punishable offence.

Since 2020, a total of 70 cases have been registered against violators. Of these, 42 cases are currently pending before the competent court, 26 cases remain under investigation, and one case has been transferred. In a notable instance from Bandepalya Police Station, a house owner was found guilty in court and fined ₹5,000 for non-compliance.

Police officials have urged landlords to verify the background of foreign tenants before renting out properties and to ensure timely submission of Form-C on the FRRO online portal. Strict enforcement measures are being taken to prevent violations, and house owners found flouting the rules may face legal consequences.

The police have reiterated the importance of compliance to avoid legal trouble and to ensure the safety and accountability of foreign nationals residing in the city. House owners are advised to remain vigilant and adhere to the legal requirements to avoid prosecution.

PG owner found dead, foul play suspected

A 45-year-old paying guest (PG) owner was found dead under mysterious circumstances in Konanakunte, raising suspicions of foul play.

The deceased, identified as 45-year-old Hemavathy, a resident of Kothanur, was financially well-off and managed a gents' PG while her husband was away in Chennai.

Preliminary investigations suggest that Hemavathy had developed a close bond with a man named Saravan, from whom she had borrowed money. On the night of March 2, Saravan allegedly visited her residence, demanding repayment of the loan. What started as a heated argument reportedly subsided in the middle of the night. However, by morning, Hemavathy was found hanging in her home under suspicious circumstances.

The incident has raised several questions, with police suspecting that the dispute over money might have escalated into something more sinister.

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SUMMER VACATION-2025
(Eng & Kan Med) Admissions Started for
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Sainik/Navodaya/Kittur/RMS Coaching
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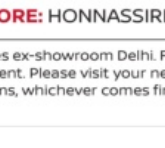
VI to X
(Mathematics, Science & English Grammar)
Classes Start from : 02.04.2025

Basavaraj Koulagi
Founder Chairman
2023-24 Result
Sainik Schools - 435
Karnataka - 167
Others States - 268
Navodaya Schools - 102
SSLC
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(143 Students)
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Clean up good, but make kids' safety priority, schools urged

Child rights activists slam school after two students are injured in bomb explosion during cleaning task, demanding accountability and stricter safety measures

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Child rights activists have expressed concern and anguish over the recent incident of two students injured in a country-made bomb explosion. The child rights activists demand the government ensure the safety of students by directing the school management not to engage students in cleaning activities.

It may be recalled that two students of a Jain monastery were injured in a bomb explosion at Anjaneya Betta, Kambadahalli in Nagamangala taluk. They said the incident has raised several questions regarding child protection. They wrote a letter to Home Minister Dr G Parameshwar to take measures to prevent such unfortunate and shocking incidents in future.

"Why did the school choose to have the children clean a remote area of the hill, a place where wild animals roam? Have they taken permission from the children's parents? Was it right to involve 10th graders in such work during an exam? Had the school previously observed the place where the children were selected to clean? Isn't it the job of the local government to clean the hills and forests?" asks Karnataka State Child Rights Observatory State Coordinator Dr Vasudev Sharma.

PICTURE FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Activisits say though engaging kids in cleaning activities can be a valuable learning experience, their safety must be prioritised

Sharma said that he wanted to know what facilities the school provided to the injured children. "Can seriously injured children take the exam? The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that it is the duty of the government to provide social security and protection to children and that it is the right of every child. The current incident clearly shows that the rights of the child have been violated. This incident violated the rights of the child to survive, protect, develop and participate," he said.

Stating that engaging children in cleaning activities can be a valuable social learning experience but schools must prioritise their protection and well-being, Nagasimha G Rao of Child Rights Trust said that any such activities must be in the best interest of the children and ensure their safety. "Taking children to cleaning work without proper risk assessment and safety measures is a clear violation of Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which mandates the protection of children from all forms of harm. Schools have a responsibility to ensure that any activities, including social work or community service, do not compromise the safety and well-being of children. Misusing children for cleaning work without proper precautions is unacceptable and contravenes the principles of child protection. Schools must take immediate action to rectify this situation, conduct thorough risk assessments, and ensure that children are protected from harm while engaging in any activities outside the classroom," Rao said.

> **"Schools must ensure children are protected from harm while engaging in any activities outside the classroom**
> – Nagasimha G Rao, Child Rights Trust

Illegal dumping continues unchecked

Toxic smoke, pollution, and health risks rise as waste piles up on KIADB land

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A massive pile of waste has accumulated on Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) land along the Hoskote–Jangamakote state highway, raising concerns among locals. Residents suspect that the garbage originates from BBMP and allege that the illegal dumping is causing severe environmental damage while posing significant health risks.

The dumping is reportedly occurring at night, with trucks unloading waste near the KMF camp office in Chikkahulluru, under Kasaba Hobli. Over time, the waste has accumulated into a massive garbage mound, leading to foul odors and environmental pollution. Additionally, the burning of waste has produced thick smoke, exacerbated air pollution and causing respiratory issues, particularly for individuals with asthma and lung conditions.

Round-the-Clock smoke and pollution

While residents are demanding strict action against the unauthorized dumping, local authorities claim they were unaware of the issue. Krishnappa, PDO of Chokkahalli Gram Panchayat, stated, "We have not yet identified who is dumping the waste at night. The issue will be investigated, and necessary action will be taken immediately." Locals report that, in an attempt to reduce the growing waste, authorities or unknown individuals are setting it on fire daily, resulting in a constant cover of smoke in the area. At times, the air turns completely dark due to the toxic fumes, making it difficult to breathe. Residents have urged immediate intervention, warning that the poisonous smoke is not only polluting the air but also posing a severe health risk.

Massive pile of waste has accumulated on Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board land

Officials assure investigation

Environmentalists and locals argue that dumping waste in unauthorized locations is illegal and poses serious risks to both human health and livestock. They have urged the local panchayat, pollution control board, and industrial development board to take strict action against those responsible. In a tragic incident, a local shepherd reported that four of his goats died after consuming waste dumped in the area. "We bring our goats to graze here every day. We didn't know the waste was harmful until it was too late. Dumping garbage in this area must be stopped immediately," he said.

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Problems in your area?
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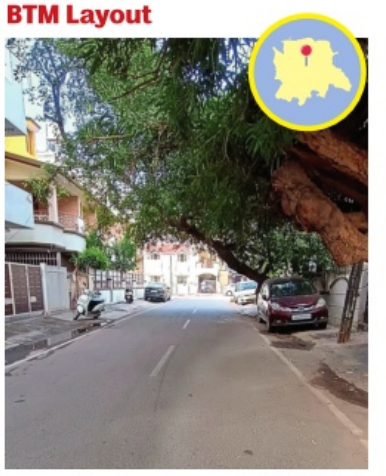
Tree obstruction

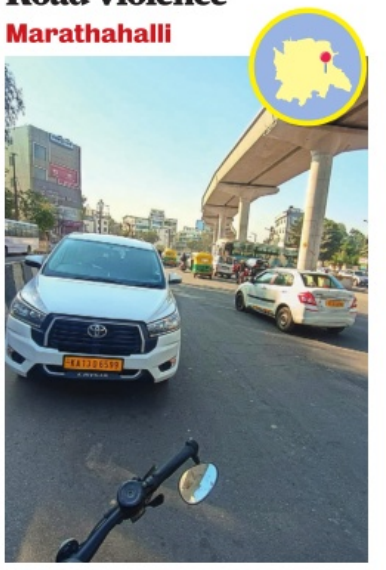
BTM Layout



Impending tree hazard at BTM 2nd Stage, Mico Layout, near KempeGowda Playground. Two dangerously bent trees obstruct SUVs and pose a risk to commuters.

Road violence

Marathahalli



Vehicles flouting traffic rules by using the wrong lane on Outer Ring Road near ISRO, Marathahalli.

Neglected plot

Versova Layout

The plot has been neglected by its owner for 15–16 years, with no inspection or cleaning. It has now become a dumping ground for residents of Versova Layout, and the association has failed to maintain it. They have directed the waste to be dumped at the Versova Layout, Kaggadasapura.

Axe falls on trees again: Activists seek tougher laws

Tree felling persists in Bengaluru, with three cut down in BTM Residency without BBMP permission; environmentalists push for stricter penalties to curb violations

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The unlawful felling of trees and branches continues unabated in Bengaluru despite strict rules governing tree removal without permission from the Forest Department of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).

The latest in the series is the axing of three trees in BTM Residency on Bannerghatta Road.

"The builder, constructing an apartment inside the layout, started by cutting branches of these trees a week ago. We did not think much of the incident and assumed the trees would not be harmed further. However, he has cut all three trees without bringing it to our notice. Trees were cut two days ago, and logs were removed as well," said a resident.

Tree branches and logs cleared without approval

Locals say these were decades-old trees that were not posing any danger to life and property.

"The trees were on the pavement and were in good condition. When we interrogated the builder on Tuesday morning, he said he had the due permission from BBMP. However, he did not show us any document in that regard," said another agitated resident.

Following the illegal act by the builder, residents in the layout took to the streets on Tuesday to protest, forcing the department to file an FIR against the builder. When BM spoke with BBMP's Range Forest officer, they confirmed that no such permission was awarded to the builder.

"I inspected the site after receiving complaints from the residents. Three trees have been cut without any permission from BBMP. We are filing an FIR against the builder," said the RFO.

However, city-based tree activists and environmentalists say such illegal activities will continue until the provision of mandatory imprisonment is brought in for unlawful killing or harming trees.

Experts say this provision of imprisonment for harming/killing trees is a compoundable offence. Under the current provision, the offender has the option to pay money instead of facing prosecution and imprisonment. Jail term comes into the picture only when the offenders are not in a position to pay the fine.

"The current provisions to punish a person responsible for illegal felling of a tree or harming it are not strict enough to act as a deterrent. There are uncountable incidents of jewellery shops and builders in the city violating the Act. These defaulters can afford to pay the meagre sum of penalty under the Act and get away with the offence unharmed. The Forest Department should work towards making imprisonment mandatory," said Vijay Nishant, Founder of Project Vruksha.

The Karnataka Preservation of Tree Act, 1976, restricts the felling of trees. As per the Act, any tree on any land, whether private or public, cannot be felled without the previous permission of the Tree Officer, which is the Deputy Conservator of Forest, BBMP in the case of Bengaluru.

Any person found contravening the provisions of this Act is liable for punishment with imprisonment, which may extend to three months or with a fine, which may extend to one thousand rupees or both. Upon such conviction, the court may order any property in respect of which the offence is committed to be forfeited to the State Government.

Notably, the Forest Department of BBMP has been talking about tightening rules around the unlawful felling of trees in the city or any damage caused to them.

A year ago, the Department had mentioned that it was planning to approach the Karnataka Forest Minister and propose an amendment to the Karnataka Preservation of Trees Act, 1976, to ensure stricter rules for killing or harming avenue trees.

BM WoW Wednesday
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Police track burglars to Kumbh Mela

Bengaluru's KP Agrahara police have arrested two thieves who fled to the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj after committing a series of thefts in the city. One of the accused is a minor and another accused is a 23-year-old, Uday.

A spate of burglaries rattled residents of KP Agrahara in the early hours of Thursday, with thieves targeting three shops on Cholurpalya Main Road. The entire act was captured on CCTV cameras, providing crucial leads for investigators. Police tracked down two of the suspects to Prayagraj, where they had gone to attend the Kumbh Mela. The accused were brought back to Bengaluru for interrogation. —BMB

Foreigners caught with MDMA

On drug trafficking, officers of the Central Crime Branch (CCB) Anti-Narcotics Squad intercepted two foreign nationals involved in peddling banned narcotics near Garden City College in KR Puram. The operation, based on a tip-off, led to the seizure of 108.6 grams of MDMA crystal, valued at ₹17 lakh, along with two mobile phones and a two-wheeler used for illegal activities.

Initially, they arrived in Bangalore for leisure but soon turned to drug peddling. They allegedly sourced MDMA crystals from contacts in Delhi at lower rates and distributed them at higher prices to college students, software professionals, and other known buyers in the city. —BMB

Fake govt job racket: Two arrested for duping aspirants

A promise of well-paying government jobs turned into a costly deception for nearly 30 job seekers, who were duped with fake appointment letters and counterfeit seals in an elaborate scam. Posing as senior officials of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), the fraudsters convinced victims that they had the authority to recruit for the agency, collecting lakhs in exchange for non-existent positions. What seemed like a dream opportunity quickly unravelled into a case of fraud, exposing the extent of the racket operating in Bengaluru.

The Central Crime Branch (CCB) police have arrested two individuals for allegedly duping job seekers by

falsely promising them positions as Intelligence Special Officers in the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), India's premier foreign intelligence agency. The accused, identified as Venugopal and Aravind, were caught after an investigation revealed their elaborate scam, which involved fake appointment letters, counterfeit identity cards, and fraudulent official seals.

According to the officials, Venugopal had been masquerading as a high-ranking Intelligence Special Officer since 2021, claiming to be the head of the Bengaluru office for R&AW. He convinced unsuspecting job seekers that he had the authority to recruit officers and staff for the intelligence agency. Under this pretence, he and his accomplice, Aravind, collected millions of rupees from nearly 30 job aspirants, promising them lucrative government positions. Once the payments were made, the accused provided counterfeit appointment orders to their victims.

The scam came to light when a resident of JP Nagar, who had fallen prey to the fraud, filed a complaint with the CCB Special Investigation Division on February 26. Acting swiftly, CCB officials arrested Venugopal from Hyderabad. Upon interrogation, Venugopal admitted to orchestrating the scam with Aravind, who owned a Xerox and stationery shop in Jayanagar 9th Block. Aravind was taken into custody on February 28 after he initially refused to respond to a notice issued by the CCB. On March 3, authorities seized Zebra company ID card printing equipment from a Xerox and stationery shop.

Further, the investigation led to seizures, including 86 fake R&AW letterheads, identity cards, six service books, fraudulent appointment orders, and nine counterfeit official seals. These were recovered from a lodge in Gandhinagar where Venugopal had been staying. Additionally, CCB officers seized an HP colour printer from an office in Supreme Layout, Yelahanka, and an SR company laptop used in the fraudulent activities.

Following their arrests, both accused were produced before the court. Further investigations are ongoing. —BMB

State govt to charge on with Sharavathy project

Despite conservation concerns, 2,000 MW hydroelectric project moves closer to approval, risking habitat fragmentation in Sharavathy Valley

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The project needs 54.155 ha within the Sharavathi Valley LTM Wildlife Sanctuary and its eco-sensitive zone

After receiving a nod from the State Wildlife Board of Karnataka in January, the controversial Sharavathy pumped-storage project has now secured final approval from the state government. The proposal has been moved to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) for Stage-I approval. Once it clears this stage and gains formal approval under the Forest Conservation Act, the project will be ready to begin operations.

According to an approval letter from the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Karnataka Forest Department (KFD), the user agency—Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL)—must obtain wildlife clearance from the National Board for Wildlife. The project requires a total of 142.763 hectares of land, including 54.155 hectares within the Sharavathi Valley LTM Wildlife Sanctuary and its eco-sensitive zone. This forested land falls under three divisions: Shivamogga Wildlife Division (14.582 hectares), Sagar Territorial Division (39.719 hectares), and Honnavar Territorial Division (88.462 hectares).

A wildlife conservationist criticised the decision, pointing out that MoEF&CC issued guidelines a few years ago stating that projects in eco-sensitive zones should not be forwarded to the Centre. "KFD should not have recommended the project, especially after the field inspection reports submitted by deputy conservators of forests. The project will have an everlasting impact on the Sharavathy Valley," the conservationist said.

KPCL had resubmitted the proposal for the hydroelectric project, which aims to generate 2,000 MW of power, through MoEF&CC's Parivesh portal. The company is seeking approval under Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, for the diversion of 54.155 hectares of forest land.

In January, the State Wildlife Board granted approval with conditions meant to minimize damage to the fragile ecosystem of the Western Ghats and the habitat of the endangered lion-tailed macaque. It was agreed that the project would use 50 hectares of forest land instead of 54 hectares, and the number of trees to be felled was reduced from nearly 15,000 to a maximum of 8,000.

State govt sends proposal for Environment Ministry nod though guidelines dictate such projects are not allowed in eco-sensitive zones

Despite these modifications, reports submitted by deputy conservators of forests from three divisions raised serious concerns. They highlighted that the project would require the construction of new roads and the widening of existing ones, leading to habitat fragmentation and disruption of the forest canopy. This could severely impact arboreal species by restricting their movement. Additionally, the continuous presence of vehicles and workers during the construction and operational phases is expected to cause persistent disturbance and pollution in the area.

The reports, filed in 2024, also noted that the project's construction period of at least five years is relatively long and could permanently alter the surrounding ecosystem. The extended timeframe raises concern about increased pollution, loss of biodiversity, and irreversible damage to wildlife habitats in one of Karnataka's most ecologically sensitive regions.

Egg for 6 days a week in midday meal gets thumbs-up from 98.97% students

Four times more students prefer eggs over bananas; Among the districts, Kolar ranks first in egg consumption

The State government's decision to provide eggs six days a week under the midday meal scheme has significantly increased meal and egg consumption among government school students. When eggs were distributed only twice a week, 93.66% of students availed of the midday meal. Now, with eggs available six days a week, the number has risen to 98.97%, marking a 5.31% increase. Interestingly, four times more students prefer eggs over bananas. Among the districts, Kolar ranks first in egg consumption.

Dr KV Trilok Chandra, Commissioner of the Department of School Education, said, "The midday meal scheme is a crucial initiative. Expanding it to six days has significantly improved meal and egg consumption, ensuring better nutrition for children."

Initially, the government provided eggs twice a week. However, after receiving a Rs 1,500 crore grant from the Azim Premji Foundation, the scheme was expanded to six days. According to an education department official, 52.76 lakh students from grades 1 to 10 currently benefit from the program. Under the earlier schedule, 32.33 lakh students consumed eggs. Now, with the six-day plan, the monthly consumption has reached 6.64 crore eggs. Meanwhile, 15.12% of students opted for bananas, and 21.7% consumed chikki. With the government recently discontinuing chikki distribution, students now have only eggs and bananas as nutritional supplements.

Kolar leads in egg consumption, with 84.16% of students choosing eggs, while Chikodi in Belagavi ranks the lowest at 30.97%. Other high-consumption districts include Kodagu at 83.88% and Chikkamagaluru at 79.49%, whereas Bengaluru North and Tumakuru have lower figures at 41.19% and 55.74%, respectively. Banana consumption remains below 31.15% across the state, with districts like Kodagu, Uttara Kannada, Dharwad, and Chikkamagaluru recording less than 10%.

However, supplying eggs six days a week has created challenges due to fluctuating prices. The education department allots Rs 6 per egg, but prices often exceed ₹7, making procurement difficult. Headmasters have urged the government to increase the budget to ensure the scheme continues smoothly. — BMB

IN BRIEF

'Contractors' dues to be cleared soon'

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar assured that contractors' pending bills would be cleared on priority. Addressing representatives of the Contractors' Association, he said smaller bills would be settled first, and all dues would be paid as funds became available. Speaking to the media at Vidhana Soudha on Tuesday, he noted that during the BJP government's tenure, work orders worth Rs 1.2 lakh crore were issued under his department alone, while the current allocation allowed for clearing only Rs 6,000 crore. He also mentioned that the Centre had yet to confirm the release of Rs 5,300 crore. — BMB

Depts mum on Lokayukta's queries

Government department heads are refusing to disclose property details of officials accused of amassing assets disproportionate to their income. Despite two letters from the Lokayukta, the departments remain unresponsive, creating a standoff between the state government and the anti-corruption watchdog.

Lokayukta Justice BS Patil said they were evaluating further steps as no response had been received. Even after two and a half months since the first letter, there has been no reply. In response, Lokayukta officials in Bengaluru have begun gathering service records and asset declarations from key urban development bodies, including BBMP, BWSSB, and BDA.

The Lokayukta has insisted that asset details of all government officials be disclosed on public platforms. Registrar M Chandrasekhar Reddy wrote to State Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh on December 18, urging immediate action. However, with no progress, concerns over transparency and accountability continue to mount. — BMB

Safety measures against bird flu

Bengaluru Urban District Administration has implemented stringent precautionary measures in response to concerns over bird flu. Deputy Commissioner G. Jagadeesha has urged the public to remain calm and report any unusual or sudden deaths of birds or poultry to the nearest animal husbandry department. The health department has also been directed to conduct awareness programs in rural areas.

Officials have clarified that consuming properly cooked poultry and eggs does not transmit the virus. However, undercooked or raw infected poultry can pose a risk. To ensure safety, eggs should be boiled above 70°C, and individuals handling raw meat must wash their hands thoroughly. — BMB

Invite muddle further sullies BIFFes mood

As veterans say they never received invitations to inaugural, organisers try to defend themselves

Kannada film stars Shivarajkumar, Priyanka Mohan and Umashree at the BIFFes inaugural event

Even as the controversy of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's threat of tightening nut and bolt is yet to subside, BIFFes has been hit by a fresh row. This time it is over invitations.

While KCA chairman Sadhu Kokila says that he cannot extend invitations personally to all invitees, prominent personalities are asking how the organisers expect them to attend the event without being invited.

Veteran directors and actors have expressed disappointment over what they call the 'poor arrangements' for the 16th edition of Bengaluru International Film Festival (BIFFes). They claim that the Karnataka Chalanachitra Academy (KCA) has failed to make proper arrangements, including sending invitations to prominent personalities of Sandalwood. It was poor attendance of actors at the inaugural function that made the Deputy Chief Minister issue such a statement in the first place.

Now it has emerged that invitations were never sent out to actors and directors, including former KCA chairman, for the inaugural event.

SV Rajendra Singh Babu, who served as the KCA chairman, said that someone had delivered the invitation for the BIFFes at his home. "I am not aware who delivered the invitation. No one has personally invited me to the BIFFes. The KCA is wasting Rs 9 crore to organise the event instead of archiving Kannada classics," said Babu.

He also expressed disappointment at Shivakumar's comment.

National award winner Tara, who also served as KCA chairperson, said she was away from home when the invitation was sent by post to her home. "My family members told me that the invitation card was delivered at home on March 2, one day after the inaugural event. During the 2012 international film festival, I personally called all actors and directors and producers over the phone, apart from sending invitations, requesting them to attend the inaugural function," said Tara.

Most dignitaries said the invites should have been sent out much before the event. "The organisers sent invitations to foreign delegates but forgot to send it to Kannada directors and producers. I have not received an invitation from the organisers though my movie Ghatashraddha is scheduled for screening on Tuesday," director Girish Kasaravalli said.

KCA Chairman Sadhu Kokila said a film festival committee was formed to send invitations to the people. "I received some complaints on the distribution of invitations. I will look into the matter," he said.

Spoken word

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday clarified his recent remarks on the Kannada film industry, stating that his words were meant for its welfare. "A couple of films have brought good fortune to the industry. I was merely saying that we should sustain this momentum. I may have expressed my thoughts in a rustic manner, but my intention is to see the industry thrive," he said. Earlier, well-known film director TS Nagabharana criticised the language used by Shivakumar. "The words used by DK Shivakumar was inappropriate. This is unfortunate," he remarked. Veteran actor Dattanna asserted that "an artist should not be under anyone's influence or pressure". He emphasised that every artist has autonomy.
Responding to Nagabharana's remarks, Shivakumar said, "I spoke in my native dialect. If he has a more refined language, he should teach me, and I will speak accordingly." About invitations, Shivakumar acknowledged that if invitations were not given, that is a mistake. He emphasised the importance of collective efforts in sustaining the film industry.

QUICKREAD

Out with OFC

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has initiated an 'Unauthorized OFC Removal Drive—March 2025' to clear illegally installed Optical Fiber Cables (OFCs) across the city. The drive commenced on Monday following a circular issued by BBMP Chief Commissioner, directing officials to remove the cables within BBMP limits.

OFCs installed along roads within the ward limits of all eight zones will be dismantled. The responsibility for the removal has been assigned to Assistant Engineers (AE) and Junior Engineers (JE) of the respective wards, while Assistant Executive Engineers (AEE) have been instructed to oversee the process.

BBMP has also taken note of unauthorised cables affixed to trees and electric poles, which not only violate regulations but also impact the city's aesthetics.

Once the cables are removed, installation teams have been directed to ensure that no more are reinstalled in the same locations.

On Tuesday, the drive was conducted in the Mahadevapura and East zones. Key areas covered in the operation included Marathahalli Main Road, Kaggadasapura, and Doddanekkundi in the Mahadevapura zone, as well as Halasuru in the East zone.

Animal crematorium to stay shut from Mar 8-25

The Summanahalli Animal Electric Crematorium, located in the Rajarajeshwari Nagar zone, will be temporarily closed for 18 days due to urgent maintenance work. According to the Executive Engineer (Electrical), the facility will remain non-operational from March 8 to March 25 to facilitate necessary repairs and upgrades. Authorities have urged residents and stakeholders concerned to make alternative arrangements during this period.

Can you say that in layperson's terms?

The High Court recently emphasised the need for simplified legislation whilst ruling on the eligibility of legal heirs to claim insurance benefits when others are designated as nominees. The Court determined that Section 39 of the Insurance Act, 1938, concerning policyholder nominations, does not supersede personal succession laws like the Hindu Succession Act, of 1956. Justice Anant Ramanath Hegde expressed concern about Parliament's unclear presentation of "Objects and Reasons" for the 2015 amendment to Section 39, which created interpretative difficulties.

"The Objects and Reasons for enacting or amending a law must contain clear unambiguous statements as to why the law is introduced, what mischief sought to be remedied by way of amendment," the Court said. The justice stated that legislative bodies should prioritise creating straightforward laws rather than complex ones that only legal professionals can comprehend. "There should be a conscious endeavour to frame/structure the law in simplest and easy-to-follow short sentence..."

CRIME FILES

Actress arrested for gold smuggling

Sandalwood actress Ranya Rao was arrested by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) at Kempegowda International Airport on Monday night for allegedly smuggling gold from Dubai. Ranya, who arrived on an Emirates flight, was found carrying 14.80 kg of gold during a security check. Following questioning, the DRI officials took her into custody and shifted her to their office in HBR Layout for further interrogation.
Sources revealed that Ranya, who gained fame with the film Manikya, allegedly claimed during questioning that she is the stepdaughter of DIG Ramachandra Rao.
The DRI had been tracking Ranya's movements after receiving intelligence about her involvement in a gold smuggling racket operating from Dubai. Officials noted that she had traveled to Dubai four times in the past 15 days. **BMB**

Inter-state bike thief busted

A trail of stolen two-wheelers across multiple districts has led to the unravelling of an inter-state theft racket, with police recovering 34 stolen bikes worth ₹23.5 lakh. The accused, who hails from Someshettihalli village in Chikkabanavara, had been targeting vehicles parked outside hospitals and other public spaces. **BMB**

PSI booked for assaulting woman techie

Madiwala police have registered a case against a police sub-inspector (PSI) for allegedly assaulting and misbehaving with a young woman after taking her to Prayagraj.
The complaint, filed by an employee of a private company in Indiranagar, accuses PSI Uttam Singh of the Kalaburagi Control Room Division of harassment and assault. Following the case registration, Singh reportedly went on leave, fearing arrest. According to the statement, she met PSI Singh during swimming training at Chandrakant Stadium in Kalaburagi. He invited her to join a trip from Hyderabad to Ayodhya with his friends in his new car. She agreed and booked a flight from Bengaluru to Hyderabad, meeting him there on February 19. Kalaburagi Inspector Prahlad, PSI Amaresh, Satish, and a driver were also part of the journey. After visiting Prayagraj and Ayodhya, Singh allegedly insisted that she accompany him to Manali. When she refused, he allegedly assaulted her, snatched her phone, and threatened her. She claimed that he also misbehaved with her. With the help of locals, she approached the police, who advised her to file a complaint in Bengaluru. **BMB**

2 arrested for theft

The Amruthahalli Police have arrested two individuals in connection with a theft case, recovering 220 grams of gold ornaments and 1 kg of silver articles worth Rs 18 lakh.
The case came to light when one of the accused, residing in an apartment in Rajenahalli, filed a complaint on February 11, 2025, claiming that unknown individuals had stolen gold, silver, and diamond ornaments from his house while he was away in Bihar from February 4 to February 11. **BMB**

Serial burglar used bathroom pipes to enter homes

A notorious burglar, who eluded the police for over a decade, has finally been arrested by Amruthahalli police. The accused, Naseer Khan, a resident of Rajapalya in Vagalur, had a unique modus operandi, gaining entry into houses using bathroom pipes instead of breaking doors or locks. Since 2012, he had been committing thefts across multiple areas, including Hennur, Amruthahalli, and HSR Layout.
Naseer Khan had 10 cases registered against him and was an expert in burglaries, primarily targeting homes at night. The police seized 220 grams of gold and one kg of silver, worth approximately Rs 18 lakh, from him. **BMB**

Builder-resident tussle over parking

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

parking space," the K-RERA official stated.

Ban on leasing parking spaces

A specific case involved two residents, who bought flats off Bannerghatta Road, Bengaluru. They had paid for two parking spaces, but during the allocation process, the builder assigned parking spots arbitrarily, leaving some flats with inconveniently located spaces.

While 30 out of 36 three-bedroom apartments received adjacent parking spots, the two residents and five other homeowners were assigned spaces in different locations, causing inconvenience.

In 2023, a family filed a complaint with K-RERA, arguing that the builder had initially promised adjacent parking spaces but later allocated them elsewhere.

This resulted in difficulties parking their vehicles and prevented them from renting or selling the spaces. Following the hearing, K-RERA ruled that the builder could not lease out any parking spots until the dispute was resolved. Similar orders were issued for complaints from four other apartment owners.

Police stations mark rise in parking disputes

Many parking disputes have also reached police stations. In one apartment complex with 12 flats, each homeowner was allocated a parking spot for one car and a two-wheeler. However, the builder later constructed a penthouse on the rooftop and sold it to another buyer, assigning them a parking spot in the common area near the elevator.

As a result, other residents faced difficulties accessing the lift due to the parked vehicle. When they confronted the penthouse owner, he responded, "The builder allocated this space to me, so I have the right to park here.

If you have a problem, talk to the builder."

However, the builder was unresponsive, forcing the residents to file a police complaint. With parking disputes escalating in Karnataka's apartment complexes, regulatory authorities and law enforcement are increasingly stepping in to mediate and ensure fair allocation of spaces.

Man forges police ID to skip toll

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

security lapses that enabled the individual to acquire the forged card. The complaint was filed by Inspector KS Devendrappa of the CCB's Organised Crime Branch, West Bengaluru. Officials acted swiftly after receiving intelligence about the misuse of a police ID card, prompting DCP Crime to direct a verification process. The probe revealed that the ID card in question lacked the official signature of any senior officer, though it closely resembled the standard-issue ID cards of the Bengaluru City Police.

Further investigation led the CCB to the Police Commissioner's VVIP Security Section, which is responsible for issuing official ID cards. It was discovered that the ID number on the fraudulent card, actually belonged to Doddabasappa K, a Civil Police Constable (CPC) posted at SR Nagar Police Station. However, the name on the fake ID was listed as Ananda, exposing a clear case of identity fraud.

"Ananda obtained the fake ID from his friend circle. Even to his friends, he claimed that he was a police official," a senior CCB official said .

Ananda allegedly used the fake ID card to pose as an inspector, confidently displaying it at toll booths to move freely without restrictions.

According to police officers, Ananda, a resident of Koramangala, who also has another house at HSR, enjoyed the freedom of the fraudulent activity for the past one-and-a-half years but was arrested three days back and is now in custody.

Law enforcement agencies are now considering stricter verification processes for issuing and checking police ID cards, ensuring that fraudulent activities like this do not go unnoticed.

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I, Akheeza, R/at No.330, 6th Cross, lakshmi layout, behind masjid, arkere, mico layout, Bengaluru-560076 have changed my name to Akheeza Abdul Majeed, affidavit dt: 03.03.2025 Notary H.R Panduranga, B.lore

I, Bazul Azhab S/o Syed othuman R/o 18,3rd Cross, New Sapthagiri layout Uttarahalli B'lore-560061 have changed my name to Bazul Ashab for all purposes.

I, Dinesh Kodanavalli Veeraraj R/o. No-142, kodanavalli,sullali post, sagar taluk, shivamogga 577401 have changed my name to K.V.Dinesh Jain for all purposes.

I, Pavithra Pawar Shyam Sundar Rao R/O No 38, RMV 2nd stage,1st A cross, 3rd block, New Bel Road, MSRIT, Blr-560054, changed my name from Pavithra Aware to Pavithra Pawar Shyam Sundar Rao for all future purposes.

I, Lavanya Mallepeddi w/o Prabhakar Reddy M, R/o No-266 Lavanya Prabhakar Reddys Villa Soukya Road Thirumalashettyhalli Bengaluru-560068 have changed my name to Lavanya Malipeddi for all Purposes.

I, Balram Singh Sikarwar R/o F-82, G-Block, PSR Aster, Chembanahalli, Bengaluru 562125 have changed my minor daughter name from Riddhi to Riddhi Sikarwar Affidavit Dt.04/03/2025 notary Harisha G, B'luru

I, Poonam W/o Balram Singh Sikarwar R/o F-82 , G-Block, PSR Aster, Chembanahalli, Bengaluru, 562125 have changed my name to Poonam Sikarwar Affidavit Dt.04/03/2025 notary Harisha G, B'luru

I Asha Milan Mehta D/o Pratap Thacker Residing At,13/10, Ground Floor, 1st Main Road, Near Jain Temple, Okali - puram, Bengaluru 560021 have changed my name to Aasha Thacker for all purposes.

I, DANUSH BALAJI R/a No 318/A, Mahaveer Rhyolite, Nyanappanahalli, BTM 4th Stage, Bannergatta Road, Bengaluru 560076. I have changed my name to DHANYUSH BALAJI. vide Affidavit dated on 04/03/2025.Sworn Before Notary S N Madhu Bengaluru

I, Sandha Rani Samanta M/O No 14877361W Hav Bishnupada Samanta resi of Purba Medinipur (WB) have changed my name to Sandhyarani Samanta before notary pub Bangalore

I MOHAMED INAYETHULLA S/o Mohamed Amanulla R/o No 3310 1st Main 14th Crs Vijayanagar Bangalore 560040 have changed my name to MOHAMMED INAYATH ULLA for all Purposes

I, Vikram Prabhakar No-36/1,RMV extension, Sadashivanagar,B'luru 560080 have changed my minor son name from Shaurya Vikram to Shaurya Vikram Prabhakar for all purposes

I Rahamathulla Katkeran Mohammad Maydeen S/O, Mohammad Maydeen R/o No 416 1st Floor Jamia Masjid Road Near Noorani, Masjid Ilyas Nagar, Bengaluru - 560078 Karnataka have changed my name to Rahamathulla Kattekaren Mohamed Mohiddin.

I, THENAZ KHANUM w/o Mazahar Pasha K A R/a No #33/16, Ground Floor, 2nd A Cross, Govindpura, Byrappa Layout Bangalore-560045. I have changed my name to TEHNAZ KHANUM. vide Affidavit dated on 03/03/2025. Sworn before notary Leela Bangalore.

GENERAL

I, FIRDOSE SHASHAVALI S/o SHASHAVALI R/o 675, 2nd Cross, Jani Bhai Compound, D J Halli, B'lore-560045 declare that my correct DOB is 01-01-1987 instead DOB 01-01-1978 for all purposes

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DIGITAL LUDDITES ARE HERE

Not anti-progress: They want to democratise tech, not destroy it

Have you ever been called a Luddite? We have – usually as an insult, rooted in a popular misconception that Luddites are anti-progress fanatics.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The original 19th century Luddites weren't against technology. Rather, they resisted its oppressive use.

Their rebellion was violently suppressed. But their core critique lives on: technology should benefit all of humanity, not a privileged few.

Today, as Silicon Valley billionaires and United States president Donald Trump turbocharge corporate control of public digital infrastructure, this critique rings truer than ever.

In response, we are seeing a growing surge of attempts to wrest back control of technology for democratic ends. This is a kind of "digital Luddism" which echoes past struggles against high-tech injustice.

The original Luddites

The Luddites were 19th century English textile workers who destroyed machinery threatening their craft and livelihoods. Historians call their tactics "collective bargaining by riot". They were fighting against technologies that centralised power and stripped workers of dignity.

Luddite resistance was part of broader struggles for labour rights and socioeconomic justice.

For example, in 18th century France, silk weavers similarly revolted against mechanisation that devalued their craft.

Earlier, England's Diggers and Levellers resisted the privatisation of communal lands. This foreshadowed today's battles over corporate control of digital infrastructure.

The Luddites faced severe punishment, including imprisonment and even execution. Despite this, their legacy endures. Today, dismissing critics of Big Tech as "Luddites" repeats the mistake of conflating resistance to exploitation with fear of progress.

In the most extreme scenario, unchecked corporate power allied with monstrous government polices can lead to atrocities. In Nazi Germany, for example, Dehomag, a former subsidiary of computer giant IBM, provided data systems to the Nazis to track victims.

Chemical company IG Farben also supplied Zyklon B gas for extermination camps. Many other companies profited from forced labour and funded the regime. This shows how complicity can make oppression more efficient.

Today, digital technologies are deepening inequality, eroding democracy, undermining privacy, and concentrating power.

Digital technologies are also fuelling surveillance capitalism, the displacement of human workers by AI algorithms and the growth of monopolistic platforms.

Platforms and AI systems governed by "broligarchs" such as Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg are also shaping politics, culture, and beliefs globally.

Digital Luddism, also known as neo-Luddism, tackles these issues through three strategies: resistance, removal and replacement.

Resistance: blocking harmful systems

Technology is not inevitable — it's a choice. Sustained collective action can counter corporate dominance and align tech with democratic values.

In 2018, more than 3,000 Google workers protested the company's military AI contract, forcing it to adopt ethical guidelines. However, in February this year, Google expanded defence deals, showing how resistance must be sustained.

Three years later, Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen exposed the harmful algorithms at the heart of the social media platform.

Then, in 2024, Amazon and Google staff also staged walkouts over a US$1.2 billion AI contract linked to Israeli military operations.

Creative industries are also fighting back. For example, in 2023 screenwriters and actors in Hollywood protested against AI replacing their roles. Similarly, Australia's "right to disconnect" law reflects Luddite principles of reclaiming autonomy.

Non-profit organisations such as the Algorithmic Justice League and the Electronic Frontier Foundation empower digital rights advocates to take back control over digital spaces by exposing AI bias and through legal litigation.

Digital Luddism doesn't reject innovation. It demands technology serve stakeholders, not shareholders.

Removal: dismantling entrenched power

Some systems are beyond reform, requiring direct intervention. Removal involves political action and legal regulation. It also involves public pressure to break monopolies or impose penalties on unethical corporations.

For example, the TraffickingHub petition has garnered more than two million signatories to hold adult website PornHub accountable for unethical or unlawful content.

This has led financial institutions, such as Visa and Mastercard, to cut ties to the website. For more than 20 years, hacker collective Anonymous has carried out cyber-attacks on authoritarian regimes, extremists and corporations.

Digital Luddites can also lend a hand to the long arm of the law.

The European Union's 2023 Digital Markets Act broke Apple's app store monopoly. This sparked a surge in small EU developers.

Big Tech has also repeatedly faced huge fines and antitrust lawsuits. However, breaking up or nationalising these corporations remains rhetoric for now.

Replacement: building ethical alternatives

Proprietary corporate systems have long been challenged by free, open-source alternatives.

But digital Luddism isn't just about using different tools. It's about systemic change towards sustainable, transparent and user-controlled infrastructure.

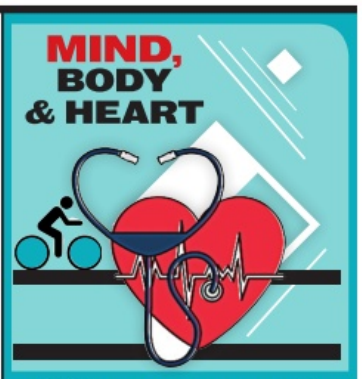
After Elon Musk's Twitter takeover, decentralised alternatives that let users control content flourished. For example, Bluesky grew from 1 million to more than 27 million users in one year.

The Australian government is also responding to a broader public demand for platform independence. For example, it has introduced policies aimed at enhancing people's data rights. Its Digital Transformation Agency is also advocating for improved open data standards.

Open-source AI projects such as China's DeepSeek and HuggingFace's Deep Research now rival corporate models, proving open tech is a force to reckon with.

The original Luddites smashed machines. But the global nature of today's digital infrastructure makes physical sabotage impractical. That's why digital Luddism isn't about smashing screens. Instead, it's about smashing oppressive systems.

(By Raffaele F Ciriello, Rick Sullivan, University of Sydney, and Vitali Mindel, Virginia Tech, The Conversation)



All you need to know about...

Plastic in brain

As much as a plastic spoon

A plastic spoon's worth of plastic is inside your brain, researchers warned on Tuesday, showing alarming new evidence about microplastic accumulation in human brain tissue.

Published in the journal Brain Medicine, the research revealed that human brains contain approximately a spoon's worth of microplastics and nanoplastics (MNPs), with levels 3-5 times higher in individuals with documented dementia diagnoses.

More in brain

More concerning still, brain tissues showed 7-30 times higher concentrations of MNPs compared to other organs like the liver or kidney.

"The dramatic increase in brain microplastic concentrations over just eight years, from 2016 to 2024, is particularly alarming," said Dr Nicholas Fabiano from the University of Ottawa's Department of Psychiatry and lead author of the commentary.

Nano but major issue

Of particular concern are particles smaller than 200 nanometers, predominantly composed of polyethylene, which show notable deposition in cerebrovascular walls and immune cells.

This size allows them to potentially cross the blood-brain barrier.

Bottled water trouble

The commentary said that switching from bottled to filtered tap water alone could reduce microplastic intake from 90,000 to 4,000 particles per year.

"Bottled water alone can expose people to nearly as many microplastic particles annually as all ingested and inhaled sources combined," said an expert.

Switching to tap water could reduce this exposure by almost 90 per cent.

Other significant sources include plastic tea bags. Heating food in plastic containers — especially in the microwave — can release substantial amounts of microplastics and nanoplastics, said researchers. —IANS

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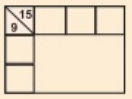
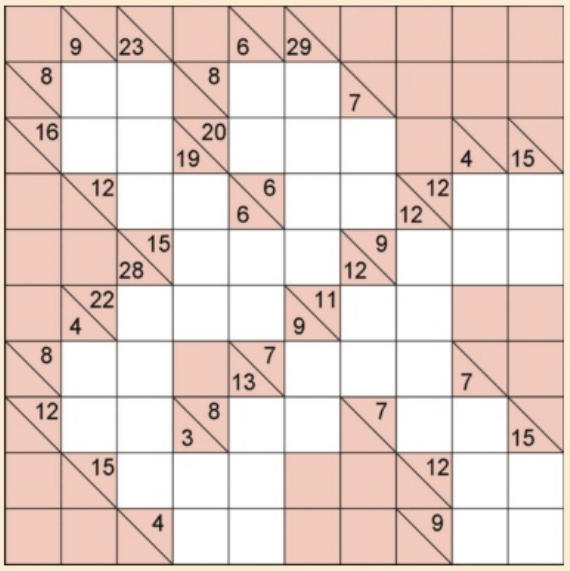
@BangaloreMirror

Kakuro

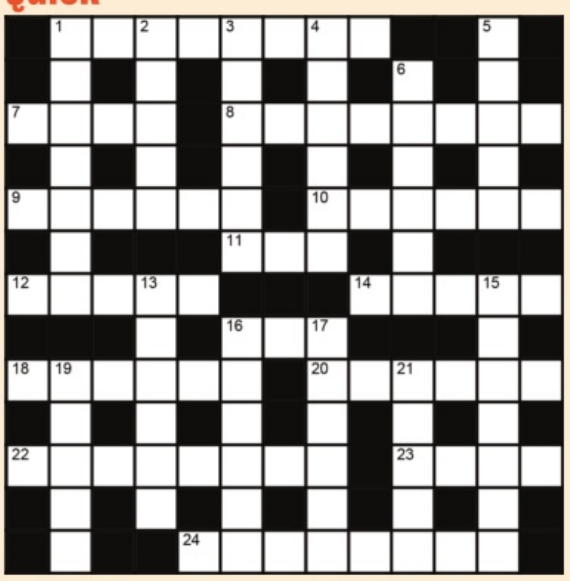


The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 He prefers to be by himself (4,4)
7 Congealed blood (4)
8 Bother (8)
9 Be slow and waste time (6)
10 Gossip (6)
11 VI for Virgil (3)
12 Verse or poem (5)
14 Take up as one's own (5)
16 Round bread roll (3)
18 Martial art (4,2)
20 Complied (6)
22 Against the current (8)
23 Mountain range (4)
24 Centre of a dartboard (8)

DOWN

1 Bangalore's famed botanical gardens (7)
2 Famous (5)
3 Pens (6)
4 Voice box (6)
5 Designation (5)
6 Declared (6)
13 Powerful or enormous (6)
15 High ecclesiastical dignitary (7)
16 Government office (6)
17 Par for the course (6)
19 Situated above (5)
21 Escape by artifice (5)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: A EQUALS P

ZSFSCO JGHYRBGX WUHW XSLG AGSAYG GQAGZC WJGLG-ZCSNX GZGJVO LGJGYO WS FG ZSJLHY.

Linemaro

If time travel were real, I would go back in time and get your favourite gentle dinosaur for you

Mindchow

True eloquence consists in saying all that should be said, and that only

Joke of the day

Why did the rubber chicken cross the road? To stretch her legs

Loop

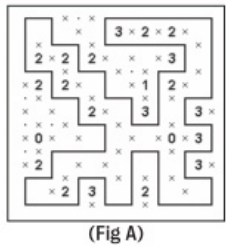
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

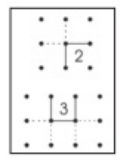
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

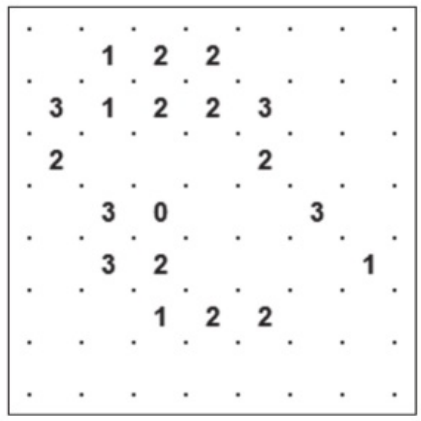
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



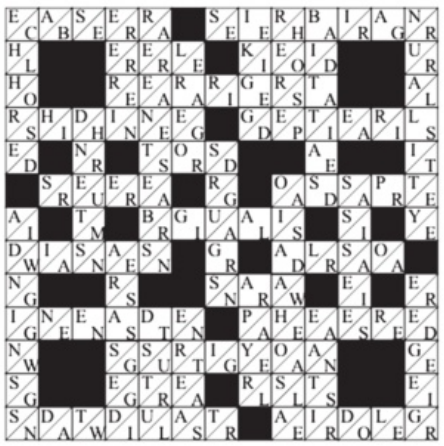
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



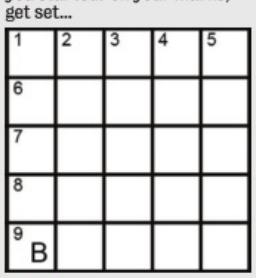
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

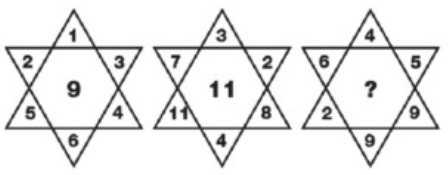
1 Mr Cap; 6 Aimer; 7 Tuile; 8 REM in; 9 So orb

DOWN

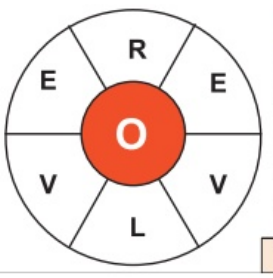
1 Mr Cub; 2 At Rio; 3 Naomi; 4 Remil; 5 Spree

Mensapuzzle

Which number fills the centre of the last star to complete the puzzle?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

06 Average; 07 Good; 09 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

	1	7		2		8	3	
		4		6		7		
5	2						9	4
			2		7			
9	5						1	7
			9		1			
1	4						7	9
		9		7		1		
	7	3		9		2	4	

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 17

1 3 4 9

Medium = 23

4 4 6 9

Hard = 14

3 8 8 4

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

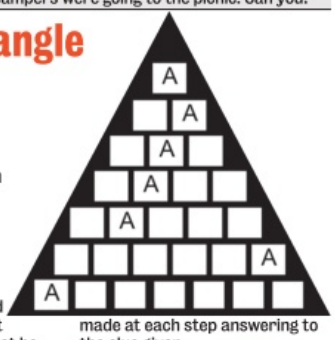
Differences: 1. Arm is longer. 2. Lamp is moved. 3. Door is taller. 4. Tie is longer. 5. Badge is missing. 6. Officer's belt is visible.

Riddler

Camp Pineveiw's cook, Margaret Johnson, was just about to begin preparing the picnic lunch for all the campers. She already knew she needed to fill 55 bowls of the same size and capacity with the same amount of food. When she was done, she decided to read the guidelines for the picnic, just out of curiosity. The guidelines said: 1. Every camper gets their own bowl of soup. 2. Every two campers will get one bowl of spaghetti to share. 3. Every three campers will get one bowl of salad to share. 4. All campers are required to have their own helping of salad, spaghetti, and soup. After some rapid calculations, Margaret was able to figure out how many campers were going to the picnic. Can you?

Alpha triangle

1 Blood gr.
2 Mother
3 Weir
4 _ do, got by
5 Titled ladies
6 Legendary gorgon
7 Took for granted

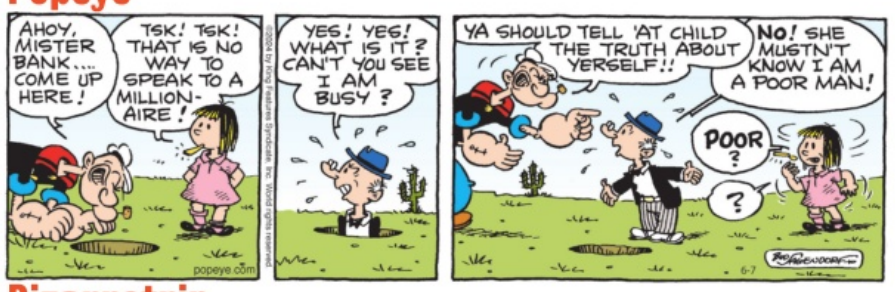


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Popeye


AHOY, MISTER BANK.... COME UP HERE!
TSK! TSK! THAT IS NO WAY TO SPEAK TO A MILLION-AIRE!
YES! YES! WHAT IS IT? CAN'T YOU SEE I AM BUSY?
YA SHOULD TELL 'AT CHILD THE TRUTH ABOUT YERSELF!!
No! SHE MUSTN'T KNOW I AM A POOR MAN!
POOR?
?
popeye.com

Bizarrotrip

Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

OKAY, THIS DOG HAS TOTALLY BEEN FOLLOWING US! WE GOTTA TAKE HER HOME WITH US!
I'LL TAKE HER ON WALKS!
I'LL PICK UP HER STINKY POOPS!
I'LL TAKE HER TO THE VET!
I'VE, UH... GOTTEN USED TO HER TOO.
HEART OF THE CITY © 2024 ANDREWS MCMEEL
GOCOMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

Crankshaft

OKAY... YOU'RE RIGHT! YOU CAN'T MICROWAVE A TURKEY!
11-28
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BATIUK & DAVIS

Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, you are blessed by the Moon and Mars, making you feel enthusiastic and energetic. You may initiate new innovations in business, which could lead to growth in the near future. Creativity will guide you in planning renovations at home or the office. Additionally, your network may strengthen, opening up new opportunities.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Family matters will take up most of your time today. You may hear good news from loved ones and focus on your children's academics and health, which will likely be under control. However, be mindful of your words, politeness is key to avoiding unnecessary arguments with those around you.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Happiness and inner vitality will boost your self-confidence today. Avoid delays in making decisions related to finances, career, or academics. There might be some self-respect issues with your spouse, so patience will help maintain harmony. Lovebirds may consider taking a short trip together.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today may feel challenging, as you experience dullness and dissatisfaction. Be cautious of hidden enemies or conspiracies. Avoid harsh words, as they could lead to legal troubles. Risky investments should be avoided for now. Staying mindful and alert will help you navigate the day safely.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Happiness and enthusiasm define your day. A new partnership may be on the horizon, potentially boosting your business. Your dedication at work will likely be appreciated by seniors, and promotions or incentives could be in store. Job seekers may find promising opportunities, and singles may meet their soulmate with the help of relatives.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
You will be busy with work today, and your patience and dedication will be tested. Stay focused, as perseverance will bring rewards. Investments in fixed assets may be considered, as long as they align with your long-term goals. Success will come with consistent effort.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Destiny seems to be on your side, making success come more easily today. A visit to a religious place may bring you inner peace. You might feel drawn to learning intellectual or occult knowledge. Students will perform well, and singles may find a suitable match. Lovebirds could make important marriage-related decisions.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
You may feel dull today and should be cautious of opponents and rivals. Avoid arguments with seniors, as they may lead to unnecessary complications. Investments in fixed assets should be postponed to prevent losses. Lovebirds should steer clear of trivial disputes to maintain harmony in their relationship.

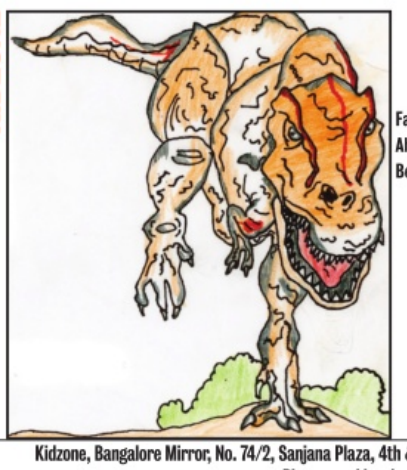
Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Family time will bring joy today. Romantic moments with your spouse will strengthen your bond, and you may consider redecorating your home. Social gatherings and parties could be enjoyable. However, be cautious and thoroughly read any documents before investing in fixed assets.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
A sense of happiness and energy will drive you today. Self-exploration and analysis will boost your confidence, making you fearless and courageous in facing challenges. Patience is advised when making financial decisions in business. Lovebirds will have a pleasant day together.

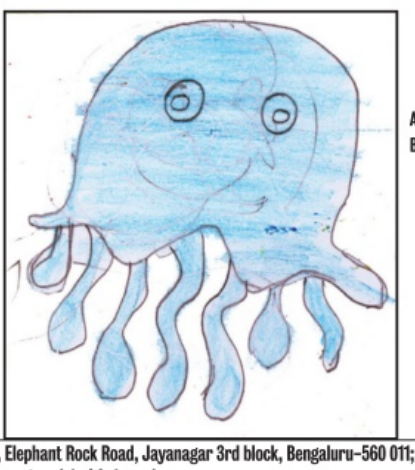
Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Your enthusiasm will be at its peak today, but it's important to regulate it wisely. Self-analysis will enhance your confidence and social reputation. Strong communication skills will help resolve problems effectively. Investors should avoid speculation, and you may also consider pursuing higher studies for career growth.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Work and family life may not be as enjoyable today. Avoid arrogance and ego in your relationship, as they could weaken emotional bonds. Issues in partnerships may be resolved with patience. Singles should avoid rushing into marriage decisions. Staying calm will help you navigate tricky situations successfully.

KIDZONE



Faiz Ahmed R, Bengaluru



Akhilesh S, Bengaluru

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Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

RIDDLER 30 campers.

FAST FIVE

C	R	A	M	P
U	T	I	L	E
M	I	N	E	R
R	A	M	I	E
B	O	O	R	S

BULL'S EYE
evolve, lore, love, lover, over, REVOLVE, role, rove, vole

SOLVE IN 1M
= 81·(-4)·(-1/2)
= 81·(-1/2)·(1/2)
= (1/81)·(1/2)
= 1/9

STRIKE OUT

QUICK

MENSA PUZZLE
5. In each star, the value at the centre equals the difference between the sum of the top 3 numbers and the sum of the bottom 3 numbers.

QUOTE UNCODE
Nobody realizes that some people expend tremendous energy merely to be normal.

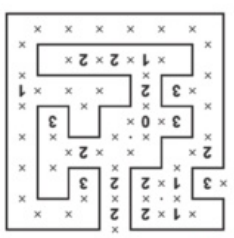
SUDOKU

6	1	7	4	2	9	8	3	5
3	9	4	5	6	8	7	2	1
5	2	8	7	1	3	6	9	4
9	5	2	8	3	6	4	1	7
4	8	1	2	5	7	9	6	3
7	3	6	9	4	1	5	8	2
1	4	5	6	8	2	3	7	9
2	6	9	3	7	4	1	5	8
8	7	3	1	9	5	2	4	6

ALPHA TRIANGLE
A, Ma, Dam, Made, Dames, Medusa, Assumed.

GO FIGURE
Easy
3 + 9 + 4 + 1 = 17
Medium
4 + 4 + 9 + 6 = 23
Hard
3 x 8 / 4 + 8 = 14

LOOP



KAKURO

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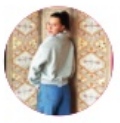

'This is bullying'— Millie Bobby Brown has sent out a message to journalists who criticised her over her physical appearance. She called out media for their "disturbing" coverage devoted to "dissecting my face, my body, my choices"

SANDALWOOD SHOTS

Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Huge task

Srujan Lokesh, the grandson of Mysore Venkatappa Subbaiah Naidu aka Subbaiah Naidu, has embarked on reproducing the first Kannada talkie movie Sati Sulochana.

Srujan announced the plan to reproduce Sati Sulochana under the direction of national award winner P Seshadri. "I know it is a tough task but I am determined to bankroll it apart from playing Indrajit in the movie. My grandfather played Indrajit in the first Sati Sulochana. I consider it my responsibility to reproduce the movie as a tribute to my grandfather. I thank P Seshadri for agreeing to direct this movie. We will leave no stone unturned to ensure the movie is ready for release on March 3, 2026," said Srujan.

Seshadri said, "The main drawback is that we do not have the print of Sati Sulochana. The government must take measures to restore Kannada classics."

Excited

Actress Apurva is excited about the release of her latest movie Suri Loves Sandhya. Apurva debuted as a heroine in Sandalwood with Apoorva while pursuing PUC. Her latest movie Suri Loves Sandhya is scheduled for release on March 6.

"I did not expect to become an actress. It all happened by accident. My mother wanted me to become a news reader for a private TV channel as I am good at reading Kannada. I happened to attend an audition for Kannada movie Apoorva while I was a PUC student. Initially, it was tough to face the camera but I managed it due to the cooperation and guidance of Crazy Star Ravichandran sir," said Apurva.

She said that she is very happy to be part of Suri Loves Sandhya as she had an opportunity to share screen space with Abhimanyu Kashinath. "The movie belongs to the love genre. I am very eager to watch this movie at theaters along with audiences. I was on cloud nine when an actor like Upendra sir appreciated my acting skills. I consider it as a bonus for me," she said.

The upcoming actress said that she was very happy with the feedback given by the audiences in Dubai where the movie was screened.

Let's be friends

Are Tamannaah and Vijay no longer seeing each other? Reports suggest so

Actors Tamannaah Bhatia and Vijay Varma, who once set major relationship goals, reportedly ended their relationship weeks ago.

The two, who had been dating for years, have decided to part ways but continue to share mutual respect and admiration.

According to Pinkvilla reports, despite their separation as a couple, Tamannaah and Vijay plan to remain friends. Both are currently focused on their respective careers, with busy schedules keeping them occupied. While the news comes as a surprise to many fans, sources suggest that the decision was mutual, and there are no issues between them.

For the unversed, their relationship became public in 2023 around the release of Lust Stories 2, their first project together.

Vijay Varma had previously mentioned in interviews that while they did not deliberately hide their bond, they also preferred to maintain privacy. He revealed that keeping a relationship secret often requires unnecessary effort, such as avoiding public outings or preventing friends from sharing pictures.

Tamannaah Bhatia also previously opened up about her connection with Vijay in an interview with Film Companion. She shared that their bond formed naturally, and she appreciated the honesty with which he approached their relationship. As someone who has always been focused on her career, Tamannaah found comfort in a relationship where she could be herself without any pretense. She described Vijay as her source of happiness and someone she deeply cherished.

In an interview with Shubhankar Mishra, Vijay spoke about his perspective on relationships, emphasizing that love should not feel restrictive. Both he and Tamannaah shared the belief that there was no reason to hide their bond if they genuinely enjoyed each other's company. However, he acknowledged that society tends to be deeply interested in personal lives, often treating relationships as a topic of endless speculation.

While their love story has reportedly come to an end, both actors remain at the peak of their careers.

—ETimes

Rivalry on sets

Neil Nitin Mukesh recently opened up about his initial rivalry with Katrina Kaif during the filming of 'New York'. Despite the on-screen chemistry between Neil, John Abraham, and Katrina being well received, Neil shared that things weren't as smooth behind the scenes.

In an interview with On Public Demand, Neil recalled his first encounter with Katrina during the filming of 'New York'. He recalled that they didn't get off to a good start, becoming adversaries from the very beginning. During their first scene together, they constantly clashed, with Katrina frequently interrupting him. Neil asked what the issue was, sensing that something was amiss. Neil shared that one day, Katrina scolded him after which they had a talk. Katrina revealed that she wasn't angry with him but was nervous, as she had primarily worked in comedies before 'New York'. — ETimes

Babil, Anna in Indo-American film

After making quite a splash with his eclectic choice of roles, Babil Khan will next be a part of the Indian-American film "Yakshi".

The short film features Babil Khan alongside acclaimed Malayalam actress Anna Ben, recognized for her performances in "Kumbalangi Nights" and "Helen". It is written and directed by Karan Sunil.

Anna Ben took to social media and dropped a few behind-the-scenes glimpses from the set of "Yakshi". Expressing her gratitude for the experience she penned a heartfelt note that read, "This was truly written in the stars. Had the most amazing time working with these wonderful human beings. @ksunzz @lambelogproductions, thank you for trusting me to be Maya. Thank you for letting me discover a whole new side as an artist. And most importantly, giving everyone a safe space to work and collaborate."

Praising co-star Babli Khan, she added, "@babil.i.k, you are an absolute darling! I hope we get to work together more and can't wait to see you do all the wonderful things you are dreaming to do." —IANS